1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi



361 The plan of the village of Kurtatchi, with details (given in Appendix I) concerning the huts of one portion of it, will serve as a concrete illustration of many points bearing on the organization of village life. The huts described formerly belonged to the hamlet of Gomen; they were being transferred to join those already standing at Kurtatchi at the time when I took up my residence in the village.

## ANALYSIS OF POPULATION OF KURTATCHI VILLAGE IN 1930[1]

621 During the nine months I lived at Kurtatchi (January to September 1930), the resident population of that village was made up as 162 follows:

| *Males.* | | *Females.* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Widowers (1 young) | 7 | Widows (3 of child-bearing age) | 12 |
| Married adults | 24 | Married adults | 35 |
| Adolescent boys (wearing the *upi*) | 25 | Adolescent girls | 7 |
| Children | 14 | Children | 12 |
| Total | 70 | Total | 66 |

Total number of both sexes and all ages, 136.

162 Apart from temporary variations, occasioned by the payment of visits and the hospitality offered to guests from other villages, 163 which are of constant occurrence, the changes taking place in the 165 population during my stay were as follows. There were two births, 574 but neither of these added to the total, since one of the babies died two days after birth, the other belonged to a woman who came from her husband's village to be confined in her mother's hut; she took the baby home in a few weeks. There was one miscarriage. One woman was known to be pregnant at the time of my departure. One marriage took place, the bride coming to live in her husband's village. There were five deaths, one old man, two middle-aged men, one child about four, and the new-born child above mentioned.

167 Two men were away working as indentured labourers. Both returned to live in the village before I left it. Proportionately fewer 881 people were away from this village than usual, because a taboo pre- 784 vented the adolescent boys and the young men who were their sponsors from signing on as indentured labourers until after the 464 performance of the *watawut∫* ceremony, an important part of the boys' puberty rites. They were permitted to work on local

[1] I am here concerned not with demographic problems but only with the village as it was when this study was made.

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
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845 the vagina during delivery and manipulate a mal-presentation—'suppose the leg came first', was the example spontaneously given to me. She used to chew some leaves with the betel-mixture and rub them on her hand before inserting it. My informant, a younger woman, did not know what these leaves were. She said that very few women knew how to do this; when it was done the child usually died but the mother got better, otherwise both child and mother died. Matēv, whose statement apparently refers to cases where there was reason to suspect that the child was already dead *in utero*, told me subsequently, in answer to a question, that she had never helped to deliver in this manner a child that was born alive.

●163 It is quite impossible to obtain from the natives data sufficiently accurate to admit of calculating the relative frequency of death in child-birth. Several instances occur in my genealogies, but the possibility of errors of omission in that type of material is so great that I do not feel justified in using it for statistical purposes in this connexion.

844 Excessive bleeding appears to be very common. The women
824 dread it, and there are many prescriptions for its prevention and control. The only one involving plants which could be identified runs as follows:

Take the root of *bariur* (*Crinum asiaticum*) and the bark of *karū* (*Barringtonia* sp.) and pound them together. Put the pulp into a pot and pour sea-water over it. Heat some stones and throw them into the pot. The woman must sit over the pot so that the steam reaches her genitals. She must also drink some of the water. Then her blood will dry up and she will be all right and will not be ill.

Of the others, some are used in similar fashion, in other cases the leaves are made hot and pressed on the lower part of the abdomen, or are chewed with the betel-mixture, some being swallowed, and the abdomen massaged with the remainder.

163 Miscarriages seem to be frequent, and still-births by no means
164 rare. In discussing this question with Government medical officers it was suggested that the prevalence of malaria was probably at least in part responsible for this.

844 On the other side of the picture, there are, of course, many confinements where delivery is quick and easy. Another woman of Tabut, who had promised that I should be present at her labour, gave birth to her child before it was expected, and so quickly that no one in the village was called or knew anything about it till the